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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [TBIO](#) [ECON](#) [SOCI](#)

SUBJECT: AVIAN INFLUENZA: IRELAND GEARING UP

Ref: State 158302

1. On September 2, Embassy delivered reftel demarche to Brian Mullen, Principal Officer, Community Health Division, Department of Health and Children. Mullen said that the GOI shared U.S. concerns regarding avian influenza and is taking steps to monitor and deter its potential spread to Ireland. The GOI was also revising its influenza epidemic plan and maintaining close contact with the WHO and EU partners. Mullen noted that the GOI planned to finalize next week a tender for 200,000 doses of the prototype H5N1 vaccine, with delivery expected in early 2006.

2. Mullen remarked that while the threat to Ireland via migrating birds was considered low, a number of inter-agency groups were monitoring the situation. The Expert Group on Influenza, which includes representatives of the Department of Health, the Health Service Executive, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Education, was meeting on a monthly basis. The Government Task Force on Emergency Planning and the Department of Defense's Office of Emergency Response were also liaising with the Expert Group as part of monitoring efforts.

3. The primary GOI point of contact for Avian Influenza is:

Brian Mullen  
Principal Officer, Community Health Division  
Department of Health and Children.  
Tel: (353) (1) 635-4310

KENNY